



Tuesday, September 24, 2002

## Record-breaking crowd joins OU Heart Walk

By **Mary E. Iorio**, OU Writer

As the sun rose on Sept. 21, nearly 20,000 people descended on Oakland University's campus for the **Metro Detroit American Heart Walk**, breaking records for turnout and raising more than \$1.2 million to support research for heart disease and stroke prevention.

"There was a huge, huge turnout," said Joanne Burrington, administrative project coordinator for OU's School of Nursing, which ran an education tent at the event. "We had extremely good participation from OU overall. The athletes had phenomenal turnout. Fraternities helped organize the parking or sent large groups walking. Departments from all over campus had high participation."

Oakland University's contingent was joined by thousands from area businesses and hospitals.

"We had Federal Mogul, most of the major hospitals in metro Detroit, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Home Depot," said Melanie Young, communications director for the American Heart Association.

The American Heart Walk is the largest single fund-raiser for the American Heart Association. While organizers were still tabulating totals on Sept. 23, it appeared the amount raised would surpass 2001's \$1.2 million figure, Young said.

Last year, money raised through the walk supported research studies across the country and in Metro Detroit. Oakland University Physics Professor Bradley Roth received a \$110,000 grant for a 2-year study of electrical stimulation of cardiac tissue.

This year's event started with coffee, granola bars and fruit near the entrance of Meadow Brook Music Festival. Registration began at 7:30 a.m. Walkers took off at 9:30 a.m. Jared Fogel, whose weight-loss regimen is prominently featured in Subway ads, took the lead.

"All along the walk there were bands and entertainment and cheerleaders," Burrington said.

The 1-mile loop took walkers past OU's golf courses and historic Meadow Brook Hall before returning them to the festival grounds for games and activities. Many people repeated the route, with an extra half-mile section, to walk 2.5 miles.

After working off the morning's granola bar, walkers ate sandwiches provided for free by Subway. Members of OU's Phi Sigma Sigma Sorority did face painting for the event's youngest participants.

At the education tent, nursing students took blood pressures, conducted stroke screenings and gave CPR demonstrations.

"We had students leading activities with kids to promote good health and nutrition. They jumped rope and ran an obstacle course," Burrington said. Children also were invited to record their views for an American Heart Association anti-smoking video.

"It just seemed like people were there to honor loved ones who passed away from heart disease," Young said, "but also to celebrate life."

For more information on the fund-raiser, visit the **Metro Detroit American Heart Walk** Web site.

### SUMMARY

As the sun rose Sept. 21, nearly 20,000 people descended on OU's campus for the Metro Detroit American Heart Walk, breaking records for turnout and raising more than \$1.2 million to support research for heart disease and stroke prevention. Oakland University's contingent was joined by thousands from area businesses and hospitals.

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